



SENATOR

**Debbie Regala**

E-Newsletter - 27th District, Tacoma

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**27th Legislative District**

**February 24, 2010**

Dear Neighbors,

We are now rounding the bend of the 2010, 60 day session. Tuesday, February 16 was the last day bills had to be passed off the Senate floor for a chance at a hearing in the House.

The momentum is still fast and furious as the Legislature wrestles with the state's \$2.8 billion budget deficit fueled by the national economic crisis. The Senate released our budget proposal yesterday. There will be ongoing talks with House members to make any necessary revisions needed to reflect the thinking of House members.

I will be providing more detail about the budget later this week. For now I wanted to provide information on some of the other legislation I sponsored and supported that is still moving through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

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**Bills I prime sponsored, now sent over to the House**

[Senate Bill 6414](#): Revises the statutes regarding registration of sex offenders. During the Interim a work group from many perspectives including law enforcement, prosecutors and victim advocates reviewed the registration statutes. Their report made recommendations for more clarity, consistency and readability. This consensus recommendation will make it easier for law enforcement to identify who is not in compliance with the registration laws without undermining public safety.

[Joint Memorial 8026](#): Petitions the interstate commission for adult offender supervision for revisions to the Interstate compact. This was one of two focuses that emerged from the review of the recent Clemmons case. Our state officials believe we did not receive sufficient background information and also want to have more authority to return offenders to the states from which they come. These changes will improve the Interstate Compact both for Washington state and for all other signatory states.

### **Bills I co-sponsored, now onto the House**

[Senate Bill 6202](#): Expands the protection of vulnerable adults from financial scams and misuse of their assets.

[Senate Bill 6345](#): Makes driving while using a hand held cell phone a primary offense. It is not rocket science that you should focus while you are driving. It is brain science that our brains cannot multi-task without losing portions of a second every time we switch from one activity to another. On the roadway, even the loss of focus for a small fraction of a second can spell tragedy.

[Senate Bill 6263](#): Continues providing Washington children with easy access to life saving immunizations. In 2009, the Legislature abandoned the Universal Purchase Program — ending it May 1, 2010 — after new and very expensive vaccines (Rotavirus and HPV) caused program costs to escalate. This measure finalizes an agreement reached between health insurers and the state to continue the service.

### **Early cuts in state spending**

Last week, Gov. Gregoire [signed into law](#) a trio of bills that we passed early in this legislative session to cut state spending.

[House Bill 2921](#) curbs out-of-state travel, the filling of open positions and equipment purchases. [House Bill 2998](#) prohibits bonuses paid to state employees. And [Senate Bill 6382](#) extends the salary freeze placed on many state employees.

These are by no means the last of the cuts we'll need to make before session ends, but they're good early steps to help narrow the gap on balancing the budget.

### **Next "cutoff" date is Friday, Feb. 26**

Last week hundreds of bills that were introduced this year and last, and which had not been voted out of the Senate, perished. This week we began hearing bills that passed out of the House, while the House began hearing the bills we passed. The next cutoff comes Feb. 26, when policy bills will have to be out of their policy committees. The cutoff for House bills assigned to the Transportation and Ways & Means committees is March 1.